

INDIAN SOCIAL MILIEU IN THE NOVELS OF ARAVIND ADIGA

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ABSTRACT

Aravind Adiga, who is an Indian as well as Australian Journalist and author, has won Britain's most prestigious literary award – The Man Booker Award for his book "The White Tiger." In his novels, there is a strong social criticism and message that unruly situations will only increase, until social inequalities are removed. Adiga explores power-relations, the quiet anger of the subaltern of those who are oppressed whether it is the minorities or poor. Regarding characterization, Adiga's pains taking description of people from all spas of life makes him an efficient critic of the modern India. And about his style, like Charles Dickens and R.K. Narayan, he has described the beauty, simultaneous simplicity and complexity of mundane life in India. Aravind Adiga, a socially committed novelist has produced a good deal of literature. His novels fall mainly into two categories, social and autobiographical. He has focused his attention on the sufferings, misery and dejection of the destitute as a result of the exploitation of the downtrodden citizens of the Indian Society. Religious hypocrisy, feudal system, the place of women in the society, poverty, hunger and exploitation are some of his common themes. In all his novels Aravind Adiga sends a social message to the people of India pertaining to modern Indian Society and how the poor people survive in crushing poverty. His great works represent to us the lives of India's poor in a practical and sympathetic manner.

KEYWORDS: Inequalities, Minorities, Complexity, Impoverished, Exploitation, Poverty, Sympathetic, Dejection & Misery

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INTRODUCTION

In a competition to innovate, a new age of young, enthusiastic writers is rapidly growing in India's literary horizons. With the writings in English language, these authors are able to present their true and unconventional images of India to readers beyond their nation's borders. One can easily notice a remarkable change in contemporary writings on English novels written by Indians¹. Today an author has grasped to address himself to the basic issues pertaining to creative and critical activity in the Indian English situation. Issues like postcolonial, multiculturalists, nativism, the social and political agendas of criticism, etc. are being treated with great importance in preference to a variety of relatively inconsequential issues². By and large, the Indian novelists are taking an attempt to face the reality around them with greater dexterity and responsibility.

As is well written, "The novel is essentially a social form; it explores the condition of human beings through the mental struggle and body language quite before they get into action." Social issues directly or indirectly affect the members of the society³.

A pioneering figure in the field of modern Indian English Literature is Aravan dAdiga. Aravind Adiga was born at Madras in 1974 and was raised partly in Australia. He studied at Columbia and Oxford Universities. A former correspondent of Indian for fine magazine, his articles have also appeared in publications like the Financial

Times, The independent and The Sunday Times. His works includes the following:

- The White Tiger (2008)
- Between the Assassinations (2008)
- Last Man in Tower (2011).4-6

Aravind Adiga's fictions quickly expended covering almost every aspect of social life, "The White Tiger" won the Man Booker prize in 2008 which portrays 'The Real India' and was Adiga's aggressive rebuke on the cheerful and false notions of a new transformed India. The novel sets up a background of a darkly comical viewpoint of the modern day life in India. The main theme of the novel is the contrast between India's rise as modern global economy and its middle class working citizens who live in extreme conditions. Other themes discussed are to include the corruption issues inherent to Indian society and politics, rivalry between India and other countries of Asia, transformations in the education system, changes in equality and poverty, etc.

In the age gone by, the social issues used to be dowry, unemployment, child labor, discrimination, poverty etc, are restored by the modern affairs like torture on women, terrorism, gambling, crime, corruption. Further, poverty and illiteracy are the main evils that still exist. Aravind Adiga highlighted mainly these current social taboos in his novel. In modern epoch one comes across modern affairs like quest for identity, loneliness, alienation, sense of non-belonging and existential crisis which are reflected on the pretext of his various novel.

Mr. Adiga has an enormous contribution offering various formulas for the complexities and concerns in the society. Rehabilitation is one of the most upcoming social matters in the modern era. The writings of Aravind Adiga revolve around the social life of a simple and common man. The pathetic condition of underdog is deeply presented by Adiga and what compels a common man to commit murder, to rob people and to force the people to go on off beam path. He explores the authenticity of life and presents extensive views of the social life of common people. The characters of Aravind Adiga are not too hypothetical and his characters, situations are also real.

In the modern literature social affairs are analyzed by the modern novelists' like- Shashi Deshpandey, Rabindranath Tagore, Aravind Adiga and others. They did not only explore the variance in the society but suggested that the proper treatment of such evil should be taken up seriously.

The perception of his novels is to make people realize their misconception associated to the social evils. People grant significance to the social stigmas rather than solutions. Community issues and problems are not prominent but the right treatment for these kinds of issues is prominent. Because the treatments of the social faux pas are not to be forgotten, to face and finish these social issues will become a herculean task. Awareness is the important remedy for such societal issues.

The novel's writing of social realism has exceedingly closed time of linear history which is apparent in its larger perspective as well. Although the novel is set on the backdrop of the fact that set India and China as new global leaders, it also presents rearrangement of the world system as a new order that has yet to be realized as per Adiga.

Being a recipient of the prestigious booker prize, 'The White Tiger' has remained critical and interest of research for the English Literature community.⁷⁻¹⁰ The characters drawn from the various walks of life and their character sketch have been discussed in detail and depth. Further comparison with other state of art literary characters of Arundhati Roy etc.

has also been cited, which clearly depicts not only the popularity of the text but also the intrigue nature of the manuscript and its characters.

Aravind Adiga in his Booker Prize winning novel, *The White Tiger*, deals with the social structure and relationships, evolution of social change and the various lacunas in it. He also refers to various evils affecting our society. The novel provides samples of various malpractices in Indian Democracy and society at a large. The book provides a social criticism focusing on the poverty and misery of India and its religious-socio-political conflicts, presented through an intelligent blend of humor and irony. The paper attempts an in-depth analysis of the social and political interventions of the novel.

The White Tiger is the story of a man named Balram Halwai and his journey of varied human emotions ranging from regression to suppression. The writer focuses on a dark picture of India to bring out the truth behind the representation of the nation. Adiga's views on India being infested with servitude and swath, where a man who is born in a poor family finds his opportunities of progress being limited and the conditions prevailing in the country are such that propel him to justify a crime like murder and thefts as legal, has been portrayed. Adiga raises various issues in this work and it is a fact beyond contradiction that India confronts by most of the issues put forward by him. But what is concluded from his work is an unacceptable viewpoint about India increasing the magnitude of the problems manifold, so that they seem to be a dominant factor in Indian society.

Binod Mishra credibly draws similarity in characters through his article, *Balram Halwai: A re-creation of Mulk Raj Anand's Bakha and Arundhati Roy's Velutha*, *Re- markings*, Vol. 9, Number 2, September 2010. This paper is an attempt to show that Adiga's Balram Halwai in '*The White Tiger*' is a re-creation of Anand's Bakha and Arundhati Roy's Velutha. The paper unveils the roots of malaise that germinated in Bakha, aggravated in Velutha re-created in Balram Halwai.¹¹

Similarly, Shrikant Singh in *Social criticism in Adiga's 'The White Tiger'*, *Re- markings*, Volume 10, Number 1, March 2011, provides samples of gross malpractices in Indian democracy.

Adiga challenges Indian culture and customs to create a society in which individuals are truly free. The same has been projected in Rabindra Nath Tagore's poem '*Where the mind is without fear....*'. It is also argued that the relevance of Aravind's novel is that it is the societal genesis and practices of hierarchy of keeping people in the lower class of Indian society. He also states that these affairs are counterproductive.¹²

Although the novel is set within the contemporary time of India and China competing to establish themselves as new global leaders, it presents this rearrangement of the world system as a new order that is yet to be realized. Amongst this race and competition to establish as global leaders, India also needs to relook into its home affairs to emancipate the quality of life of its own people.

The White Tiger and, *Between the Assassinations* (2008), both written by Aravind Adiga are about two different perspectives of India: India, before and after globalization. The stories of *Between the Assassinations* are set in a specific time frame in pre-liberalized, socialist India, between the assassinations of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of the country and her son (former Prime Minister) Rajiv Gandhi. The series of such events took place around mid of eighties and beginning of nineties when the Indian set was undergoing a major change.

Adiga's latest novel, *Last Man in Tower* (2011) focuses on the ongoing real estate issues in Mumbai, particularly on an epic struggle between the changes of the past and the present. It has also been depicted that colonialism and imperialism are not at all obsolete even after their formal termination. Further, Globalization has affected the social as well as cultural ethics. The novel also analyses how globalization as a form of neocolonialism in the postcolonial period influences the English literature in the ever-changing modern trends.

In this latest novel, Mr. Adiga has presented Mumbai as a commercial and financial hub which has emerged as place of splendid opportunities. To have a well-built house constructed in Mumbai is a farfetched dream of middle class because of the corrupt politicians and their intimate relations with the real estate developers. The inhabitants of *Tower* represent the middle class psyche of Mumbai trying to share the rapid economic expansion, sudden fortune and amazingly glorious riches on account of neo-globalization. The novel revolves around two forces: the retired school teacher who signifies a postcolonial resistance and the greedy developer who stands for neo-colonial paradigm. The dignified and a man of strong principles, the old man is made to confront certain conflict with an impatient and impetuous younger generation who have successfully adjusted themselves to face the opportunities, challenges and threats of a new emerging world.¹³

Numerous comparisons have also been drawn between the characters and style of writing of Aravind Adiga with the other authors and writers of the contemporary generation. Indian postmodern novelists focus on lavish life, Corruption and Class-conflicts. Though, a copied form as well, the means of communication is irrefutable.

Attempt is made to consolidate the common features of contemporary men and women and their challenges in their own places. This is also to highlight the current features of Indian novels in English.¹⁴

Post-colonial novels are not full of ethical conducts rather it is just for the sake of reading, absurdity dominates to a certain extent. Though so, the instructions are implied and not dictated. It is absolutely vague to explain in detail about a manic person, but that cynicism has become a part of everyone's life.

Between the Assassinations, is a collection of short stories set in Kittur, on India's southwestern coast, which represents one of the hundreds of small Indian towns out of which the skilled and educated move out whereas the despondent remains. Each of the stories circulates around an incidence of violence or corruption. Example, a street-side bookseller who is attacked for selling a pirated copy of the *Satanic Verses*, a disgruntled student who sets off a bomb in his chemistry class, a girl who is forced to beg to support her father's drug addiction, and so on. Through this mechanism, Adiga again draws attention to a series of wide known injustices—including "the disparities between the poor and the rich, communal disharmony, corruption, violence and hypocrisy"⁵ and their impact of human relationships.

Between the Assassinations is divided by day, ranging from "Day One" to "Day Seven," with each distinguished by a landmark in the tonal town and headed by a short blurb in the style of a tourist guidebook, addressed in the second person to a potential or imagined tourist.

CONCLUSIONS

Adiga's advice to the nation regarding preservation of the power of the youth is highly admirable. He articulates through his narration, penetrating and discerning analyses of what troubles Indian politics, society and the economy and advises what needs to be done and set it right. The characters of Aravind Adiga too much real, his characters and situations are also real than supernatural. Aravind Adiga has carved a niche for himself in the mind of readers worldwide with his uniquely Indian style of writing characterized by satirical description of his land, Indian social milieu, fluidity of language

and melancholy vibes, he as a writer is definitely adored by critics and common popular alike.

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